



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

VIII.

THE NATIVE ARMY OF INDIA.

A TELEGRAM, received some few weeks ago, informed us that 7,000 native troops had been ordered to embark at Bombay for employment in Europe. It startled those who were likely to become our active enemies, who had been under the impression that we should have had to increase our garrisons in India in the event of war, and it roused up Englishmen to a consciousness of military resources, long possessed, but never previously realized by the nation. Lord Beaconsfield was the first of our public men who reminded his countrymen that England was the greatest of all Asiatic powers, and, by this move of Indian troops to the Mediterranean, he has made them feel their great military strength. It has come upon them as a sort of revelation. It had been previously the fashion to regard our Indian Empire merely as a valuable possession that was more or less a source of weakness to us; as a distant province, to retain which we might at any moment have to exert all our strength; and that, whether threatened by internal rebellion or external aggression, might every now and then necessitate the dispatch of a large force from these shores to preserve or protect. No one seems to have thought of it as an integral portion of her Majesty's dominions capable and willing to assume its share of our burdens in time of war, or to contribute toward the defense of our world-extending interests in the event of those interests being attacked. Our ablest officers had studied and worked out the best policy to pursue should Russian aggression in Central Asia endanger the peace or security of our Afghan frontier. Plans without end—as numerous, doubtless, as those devised in Russia for the invasion of India—had been discussed by us for countering any such undertaking, all more or less requiring the coöperation of troops to be sent from

England; but that a blow struck by Russia at our great European interests should be met by an army dispatched from India, had never been dreamed of. It remained for Lord Beaconsfield to point out to us the mine of military strength we had long possessed in the Indian army, but which we had never before thought of using for imperial purposes; and, among the many great acts for which he will be remembered in history, by no means the least will be that he was the first Englishman wise enough to appreciate the real value of that splendid army, and to utilize it in a great European crisis.

To the dreamer of Utopian dreams in this country, it is a horrible idea that England should ever be a strong military power. What would become of them, and of their theories of universal peace, should England ever embark in a great war! They had fondly believed that as long as the British army was kept down to the extremely modest proportions annually fixed by the Mutiny Act, all dread of such an immoral possibility was averted; but when the telegram to which I have referred reminded them of another army possessed by this country, also available in case of war, the shock to their nerves was really serious. Parliament was not sitting when this hated news was received, so they could not even hope to embarrass the Government by an angry discussion upon it. While the country was at first somewhat dazed by this unexpected intelligence, to question the constitutional bearing of the proceeding might be telling; but by the time the Houses would reassemble—most aggravating of all provoking thoughts—it was certain to all, who knew John Bull's character, that he would have realized the value of his newly-discovered strength, and would feel grateful to those who had brought it to light and shown him how it could be utilized.

The members of the small but noisy party who denounce all who desire to check Russian aggression are apparently influenced by various and conflicting motives. Some are ardent admirers of Russia because, after the Carlyle school of thought, they are worshippers of strong, autocratic governments, and cannot brook the idea of hampering her action in any way whatever; others decry any attempt to do so from a sincere admiration of the czar, who is said to have made freemen of the serfs, and to have preached a crusade against all Mohammedan rule in provinces where there are

any Christian inhabitants. There are those who deprecate engaging in war under any circumstances; and others who from purely party motives oppose the warlike preparations made by a conservative Government presided over by a minister whom they hate, not simply because he is their political opponent, but because he is a successful rival, directing with general and enthusiastic approval the affairs of a nation which has become alienated from their views, and—most unpardonable of faults—from themselves personally. The awakening caused by this telegram from India to the fact that our military strength is not henceforth to be gauged exclusively by the number of soldiers raised at home and annually voted by Parliament, has deeply angered those to whom I refer. To the credit of Englishmen be it said, however, that many of the opposition have risen superior to party politics, and cordially approve of this important measure; they feel it to be a great step made toward the firm union of India to England; they rejoice over the feelings of loyalty it has evoked from all classes in Hindostan; and their satisfaction at finding that, as if by enchantment, a great army has been added to the military strength of the nation, is heart-felt and unbounded. Those who cry for peace, peace at any price, have been most fertile in propounding reasons why England should not, under any circumstances, fight. Some of those reasons have been foolish; but one—frequently expressed—has been positively traitorous toward the people, for surely it is infamous to tell a nation with a history such as our history is, that it would be criminal to expose ourselves to the certain defeat we should experience if we dared to enter the lists against so powerful a nation as Russia. As proofs of this theory we have been reminded, over and over again, that while the British army is barely 200,000 men, distributed in detachments over the world, the Russian army is said to be three-quarters of a million. If any one attempts to point out that as we could afford, owing to our insular position and great wealth, to wait until we had raised and organized a vast army, he is met with the rejoinder, “How can you, from a population of about 32,000,000 people, hope to obtain as many troops as Russia with her 83,000,000 inhabitants?” The dispatch of this handful of sepoys from Bombay to Malta has destroyed this argument, for it reminds us that, without counting our colonies, we have one possession alone with a popu-

lation of over 240,000,000 souls, or about three times that of all Russia.

Those who know India and its people are well aware of their fighting character, and that its army consists to a considerable extent of men drawn from the most intensely warlike races in the world—of men to whom warfare is the breath of life, who despise all mercantile or other peaceful occupations as employment unfit for men.

As a last resort, the Russian party here have taken to preaching homilies upon the Constitution of England, and to pointing out how seriously its provisions have been infringed by the employment of Indian troops in Europe. Others, and among them are many who know little or nothing of India, shake their heads, and tell you the measure is fraught with danger to our position there: we are warned of what may follow when, at the end of a successful war, we shall have to disband a large number of the sepoys who have helped us to victory, forgetful of the fact that it is a danger we successfully encountered when the great Sikh army was disbanded, after the Punjaub War, and again at the end of the mutiny, when we very largely reduced the army we had expressly raised to put it down.

There is no reasoning, however, with men to whom party considerations are of the first moment, and who feel bound to discover bogies in every measure adopted by the party in power. In order to denounce and oust from power the engineers who have constructed the road, they pretend to find fault with the road itself.

The fact, however, remains that, while living under the belief that our army was very small, this telegram from India suddenly, and without any previous preparation for the startling announcement, conveyed to us the glad tidings that our army had been doubled in strength, and it caused us to realize for the first time that we possess an almost unlimited recruiting-ground, where soldiers are to be obtained in, I may say, unlimited numbers, from a vast population by whom the occupation of a soldier is regarded as the highest of all earthly pursuits.

Although we have now been a power in Hindostan for over one hundred and twenty years, and although it is barely possible to think of any family in Great Britain entirely unconnected with

our rule there, it is yet strange how little is known of that great empire by the vast majority of people living out of India. Its size, the magnitude of its rivers and of its mountain-chains, and the greatness of its population, are seldom realized by those who have never been in the country. The conservative instincts of the Hindoo have survived many a conquest. Conquerors with their armies, who have established themselves in India, have by degrees lost their individuality, and their natural or national characteristics have gradually disappeared, until they have become as thoroughly Indian as the Brahman of purest descent. Even the successive waves of Mohammedan invasion have in the course of time died out, having burst and spent their strength against the temporarily yielding but indestructible sands of Hindoo prejudices and superstition, leaving little mark behind them. The religion of the Prophet remains, but in an adulterated form—so much so, that I have heard Indian Mohammedans talk of their “caste” when reference was made to some of the many trifling acts which the followers of Brahma would far sooner die than willingly perform. Contact with a vast people whose religion and customs are still the same as they were when Alexander reached the Indus, has apparently resulted, not only in rounding off some of the most salient dogmas inculcated by the Prophet, but has seemingly in some degree impregnated his followers with a superstitious respect for, if not an actual belief in, the religious observances prescribed in the Sanskrit Vedas.

Unlike previous conquerors, we have never settled in the country; we have never been more than a foreign garrison, kept constantly renewed by detachments from England; but, although we have consequently escaped any assimilation, either in religion or customs, with its people, we have practically failed, as yet, to work any great palpable change in those over whom we have now ruled so long. Before the construction of railways it used to be said that, were we driven from the country, no trace, no monument, of our rule would exist ten years afterward, beyond the empty beer-bottles we had left behind us.

This move of troops from India to Malta, with a view to the possibility of a war being forced upon us, has turned public attention somewhat to Indian subjects; and those whose only knowledge of the Indian army consists in the fact that the Bengal army,

or, as it is currently but very erroneously believed, the whole Indian army, had mutinied in 1857, are now anxious for information regarding it. I shall endeavor, therefore, to supply your readers with some few facts on the subject.

Each of the three great governments in India—Bengal, Bombay, and Madras—has a distinct army, which, with a very trifling exception to the rule, serves only within its own territorial boundaries. In the event of any great emergency, such as that which resulted in the destruction of the Sikh kingdom, or the Bengal mutiny of 1857, troops are sent from the other presidencies to that which becomes the theatre of war; but, when the contingency that called for their services is over, they return to their own presidency. Each army has its own special regulations and customs, and there is considerable rivalry, I might almost say jealousy, between them—feelings especially prominent among their respective officers. In the last century the Madras army took part in several brilliant campaigns, such as that in which the Duke of Wellington won for himself the title of “sepooy general,” contemptuously applied to him by the first Napoleon when he wished to depreciate the achievements of one destined afterward to become his victor. Since then the Madras army has played no great part in our Indian history, although it furnished a large proportion of the expeditionary forces sent to China and to Burmah in 1840 and 1852. Upon neither of those occasions, however, did it take any prominent place in the events of those wars. It sent a small contingent to Bengal during the mutiny, but, beyond proving the great fact that the spirit of disaffection, which had swept through the ranks of our Bengal regiments, had not influenced its loyalty, and beyond enabling us, in using it as garrisons along our line of communications, to dispose of more Bengal regiments than we could otherwise have done, its services were not actively called for.

The history of the native army of India teems with interest, for it tells the tale of the English conquest of the country. It is full of romantic incidents, and of deeds of chivalrous daring. Many of its most brilliant pages have been penned by our ablest and most graphic writers. It is inseparable from some of the great names first learned by the schoolboy, and most highly esteemed by the British statesman, and events are associated

with it that will be looked back to with pride and with shame, with joy and with horror, as long as Englishmen remain to take an interest in the annals of their race. Who is there that has not in early youth thrilled over Macaulay's essays on Clive and Warren Hastings? Who has not shuddered at the story of how our imprisoned countrymen tore one another to pieces in their death-struggles to get near those narrow loop-holes through which alone air or light could enter the "Black Hole of Calcutta," on that never-to-be-forgotten day of stifling heat? Who has not heard of Meer Jaffier, of the cruelties of Surajah Dowlah? What name is better known than that of Tippoo Sahib? Where is the military student who has not read Kay's story of the Afghan war, and been puzzled to know whether his wrath should be poured out most upon the ignorant rulers who intrusted the command of the most important expedition ever sent by us beyond the frontiers of India to a feeble old man, physically unfit from age for such a position, or upon the writer who described its misfortunes in such gloomy and yet magniloquent terms that, what was in reality nothing more than the destruction of a brigade, has assumed in our history the magnitude and importance of a national disaster as overwhelming to us as the Moscow campaign was to the first French Empire? The story of how one native army mutinied, because it had been proposed to alter the shape of the sepoy shakos, has caused many a smile; while the narration of what was done at Cawnpore in 1857, by another equally unfaithful to "its salt," still sends the blood racing through one's veins, and still rouses feelings and memories that in calmer moments we are anxious to stifle and forget. Not in the stories of the "Arabian Nights," nor in any work of romance that I know of, can accounts of fictitious events be found more exciting in their nature, progress, and results, than the narratives of many and many actual incidents in the pages of our Indian military history. Those who, in the pages of Walter Scott, seek to satisfy their taste for the wonderful and for warlike adventure, those whom Prescott's thrilling stories of Spanish enterprise and Spanish cruelty have ceased to excite, cannot do better than dive into the narratives of our military doings in India. The history of our native armies is still to be written, and, should it be penned by an author worthy of the subject, it cannot fail to equal in in-

terest the most stirring tales of adventures that the most imaginative novelist has ever put on paper.

It was in 1662 that the first detachment of regular British troops landed in India, from which date, until the battle of Plassey placed Bengal at Clive's mercy—nearly a hundred years afterward—our position in India underwent many curious and rapid changes of fortune. We had to fight for our existence there not only with native rajahs and powerful nawobs, but with the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French. It was apparently the able French adventurer Dupleix who first discovered how powerful would be a native army, organized on European principles and officered by white men, and it was that really great though unfortunate pioneer of French influence in Hindostan who taught us how to conquer Indian provinces with Indian sepoy. We soon found how easily military instruction could be imparted to the warlike classes, then so numerous in every important division of the country; and, as our officers came to know their men, to appreciate their warlike virtues, and when the latter had learned and seen tested, in many a battle fought against overwhelming numbers, the superior claims to leadership possessed by their European masters, there grew up between the sepoy and the English officer those feelings of comradeship and mutual confidence which constitute the bonds of union upon which rests the whole fabric of our native army administration. That the private soldier should personally know and esteem his captain, is far more necessary in a sepoy than in a British regiment; personal influence, on the part of a leader, whether he be captain or colonel, has more weight among Indian than among European soldiers. I have seen this exemplified upon many occasions, when native troops, who would do nothing in action under men they knew little or nothing of, would behave with the utmost gallantry under leaders whose valor had thrown a spell around them, and whose title to command them had been proved in many an encounter.

The sepoy possesses many of the highest military virtues; indeed, they are, as it were, instincts ingrained in the races from which he is drawn—races who regard a soldier's occupation as the noblest of earthly pursuits. The honor of a soldier is common to all ranks, and is not confined to the hierarchy of the officer-class, as we too frequently find is the case in Western

armies. They have their own peculiar views on the subject, but I have no hesitation in saying that the crown jewels would be safer in some respects under the charge of a sepoy guard or a sepoy sentry than if committed to the care of European soldiers. I am sorry to say that I have known instances of thefts from a treasury committed by British soldiers who had been placed as a guard over it, while I have never known of one where such a heinous crime could be laid to the charge of our native troops. The currency of India being exclusively in silver rupees, convoys of treasure in transit from one station to another are very common; this was especially the case before the construction of railways, and the duty was carried out exclusively by native troops. When the great mutiny burst suddenly upon us in 1857, many of these treasure-escorts were, as usual, on the march, the men of which, in numerous cases, belonged to regiments that had mutinied, and in a few instances had killed their officers after the convoys had started; yet such were their peculiar notions on the subject of faithfully protecting what had been openly and unhesitatingly committed to their safe keeping, that I never knew of an instance where that trust was abused, although in more than one case, as soon as they had handed over the treasure at the station it was intended for, the sepoys composing the guard joined their mutinous comrades forthwith.

Since 1857 the three Indian armies have been completely re-organized. Previous to that time all regiments, whether of cavalry or infantry, had an establishment of twenty-four English officers, being very nearly as large as that laid down for British corps, and in about the same proportions as regards ranks. Besides these, there was a full complement of company native officers, who, from being promoted from the ranks, I may say exclusively on the seniority system, were so old as to be utterly useless. In regiments where the majority of the men were Brahmans, or of other high castes, as was generally the case in the regular Bengal army, it was not very uncommon to find an officer who was a man of low caste, and the result was most unfortunate: although obliged to pay his officer respect when on parade, as soon as he was off duty the Brahman private not only ceased to do so, but—as was the immemorial custom in civil life—exactd from his low-caste officer that reverence which his superior birth entitled him

to. Under the old organization it is therefore scarcely necessary for me to add that the native officer was simply a fifth wheel to the regimental coach. His position was valued for the pay attached to it, and for the pension it carried with it when the man was discharged from actual decrepitude—and few were then discharged until they were more or less decrepit. On parade he repeated, in a parrot-like fashion, some minor words of command, but practically he exercised neither influence nor authority over the sepoys of his company. Although the position afforded no outlet for ambition, it held out to the well-behaved sepoy the prospects of an honorable provision for old age—an advantage nowhere more highly appreciated than in India. The system was one that, when viewed from a purely British point of view, had at least the great merit of stifling all ambitious craving after power or high military command, which was reserved exclusively for those of the ruling race. In it there was much safety, for, while we drilled all in our pay to be good soldiers, we studiously avoided running the risk of educating any to be officers in anything more than in name, so that none should be found capable to lead should the British element at any time or from any cause whatever be withdrawn from the regimental establishments. We reaped the full benefit of that system when the Bengal army mutinied; for, curious to relate, although nearly two and a half years elapsed before it was completely stamped out, no native leader of any military merit came to the front: the sepoys had lost the leaders—the English officers—under whom they had been accustomed to fight, and in whom they had had the utmost confidence, and they could find no native officers whom they trusted capable of supplying their places.

The reorganization of the Indian army has been carried out upon principles diametrically opposite to those upon which the old army was constituted; and time, bringing with it the heavy strain of war, and perhaps the still more crucial test of mutiny, can alone prove whether, for all the purposes for which a native army is maintained, one organized upon our existing system is a better and a safer or even as good an implement in our hands as that we possessed before the recent changes were effected. Those changes have been made deliberately, and upon the advice of a few very able men, but there is no concealing the fact that they

have been carried out in opposition to the views and opinions of the great bulk of the most experienced of our Indian officers.

Before the reorganization, promotion among the English officers of the native corps was carried out regimentally, and, as a rule, the battalion that the boy-cadet joined at about sixteen years of age he remained in until he either became a general or retired upon a pension. The regiment was his home; if he joined the staff, or received an appointment in the civil administration of the country, in the event of his corps taking the field, he had to rejoin it. He was personally known to all the native officers, to most of the non-commissioned officers, and, if not to all the privates, his name, his character, and his disposition, were fully known to them from the reports of others. He went back to his home, which was practically as he had left it, although some few of the old servants whom he had previously known had been replaced by others. Now, on the other hand, the officers of each army are borne upon one list, so that possibly a man may change his regiment many times during the course of his service. To reduce this changing as much as possible, a most expensive and a very anomalous system has been adopted, namely, that instead of having an established number of officers of each rank, as is the case in every other army I am acquainted with, and giving promotion only when vacancies are occasioned by death or retirement, all officers of the local Indian army are now promoted to the rank of captain after twelve years, to that of major after twenty, and to that of lieutenant-colonel after twenty-six years' service. The result is, that in some regiments you have not a single subaltern officer, and in others the majority have the rank and draw the pay of field-officers, although doing only the duty of captains or subalterns.

To all native cavalry and infantry regiments (the latter never consist of more than one battalion) serving in India, there are now only seven combatant and one medical British officer, their designations being, one commandant, one second in command, one wing or squadron officer, one adjutant, one quartermaster, and two subalterns. None of these are attached to companies, but all are supposed to lead the regiment by wings in action, the direction and command of the troops or companies devolving upon their respective native captains.

The two great objections urged against this system are—1. That natives never can lead companies as well as Englishmen; that what always made our sepoy battalions superior to those against whom we contended in the East was the great advantage they derived from having every company led by one or two English officers; that native troops require as large a proportion of English officers as British regiments, and should therefore have at least one per troop or company. 2. That the experiment we have embarked in, of teaching men to be efficient captains, is one fraught with extreme danger to the ship of state; that, should another mutiny overtake us, we shall find our sepoys arrayed against us under their native captains, whom we have taught and educated to be their natural leaders. Among the vast number of young, active native officers so instructed, it is folly to hope that none will come to the front as generals; and, finally, that, by the very fact of bringing forward and educating these young men to be officers, you introduce into your military system an element of danger that is, in the nature of things, most likely to conduce to mutiny. The presence in each infantry regiment of sixteen and in each cavalry regiment of thirteen native officers, a proportion of them being designedly of the highest social classes we can induce to join, and all being whetted as it were by the most dangerous of all sorts of military ambition, that prescribed within very narrow limits, is described by many of our best Indian officers as pregnant with future peril.

The arguments in favor of this system are many and forcible. We are told that in raising a mercenary army from an alien race we must incur risks, and that our present organization presents at least no more than that which utterly collapsed in Bengal in 1857; that, in former times, our English officers were always on the lookout for some staff or civil employment away from their regiments, which would give them higher emoluments, and that in order to counteract that practice, which resulted in generally leaving with their corps only the most stupid and worthless officers, the good ones having found some outside occupation, it was necessary to largely increase the rates of regimental pay; that in order to do so it was absolutely necessary to reduce considerably the complement of British officers in all branches of the service, as the revenues of the state could not support the charge of pay-

ing at the increased rates the old establishment of numbers; that the ordinary routine of duties with a native regiment were trifling in comparison with those in a British battalion, and that, consequently, when there was the old large proportion of officers to native corps, they had so little occupation and responsibility that it was difficult to maintain among them that high standard of efficiency so essential to men who have to lead natives in the field; and that, lastly, it was deemed expedient to make room for the active employment of native officers, thus holding out an honorable career and an assured and recognized position of trust and responsibility to men of what we may term the gentleman-class. We are told that, prior to 1796, our native army, which had then already distinguished itself at the battles of Plassey and Buxar, in the campaigns in Guzerat, the Carnatic, Mysore, and against the Dutch at Chinsurah, had never had more than five British officers to each regiment of about 550 or 600 sepoys. Further, that during the great wars which resulted in our annexation of the Punjaub, our battalions on the average had not more than about seventeen English officers each. Be the change for future good or future evil, the new organization has now been many years in existence, and it must be admitted, by even its greatest opponents, that our native armies have at no previous period of our Indian history been so efficient as they are at present.

With a view to reducing the chances of combination and conspiracy among the sepoys as far as practicable, care is taken to enlist men of many various creeds and races, and to mix them in regiments and companies as much as possible. There are a few special corps where this has not been done, such, for instance, as in the regiments of Goorkhas, one of whom has just been landed at Malta. Sometimes this plan is carried out by having men from several tribes or districts collected into one company, while in some regiments the different races or castes are separately collected together in troops or companies: thus, you may have in the one battalion a company of Sikhs, one of Punjabee Mohammedans, one of Jats, one of Afridees, one of low-caste Hindoos, and so on. Except, therefore, in a few instances, there is nothing like homogeneity in the composition of regiments. Thus, taking the Bengal army, which is the largest, and consists of men drawn to a great extent from the most warlike material in our Indian Em-

pire, there were the other day between 6,000 and 7,000 Hindustanee Mohammedans, between 8,000 and 9,000 Rajpoots, about 2,000 Jats, about 6,000 low-caste Hindustanees, 6,000 Punjabee Mohammedans, about 1,000 Hindoos, 12,000 Sikhs, 1,200 Mwy-bee Sikhs, 5,000 Afghans and Pathans, between 5,000 and 6,000 Goorkhas, and some 4,000 of Dogras, and other hill-classes, etc.

The regiments of the native army are frequently moved from one station to another, and it is considered good policy never to allow any large concentration of native troops at any one station, except upon occasions of great manœuvres, when there is also present a large British force.

In the cavalry of the Madras army the horses are provided by Government, but, in that of Bengal and Bombay, the trooper, or sowar, as he is designated in India, finds himself in everything except his arms; he joins, bringing his horse with him, and, as long as he remains in the service, is obliged to subscribe from his pay to a regimental fund, from which he is supplied with a horse, should his own die or become unfit for work. His pay is twenty-seven rupees a month, which is only worth about £2 9s. in sterling money since the depreciation in the value of silver. On this he lives, finding his horse and its forage, his own clothes, and his food. The pay of the infantry sepoy is seven rupees (about 12s. 9d.) a month, on which he feeds himself, his arms and regimental clothing being found by the state. These rates of pay will convey a good idea of what a man and his family can live well upon in India, for it must be remembered that the soldier there occupies a good social position, and that the inferior servants are not nearly so well paid. The Indian is the most thrifty of mortals, and most abstemious in his habits. It was a well-known fact in the old army that, in order to put by money, many sepoy did not eat a sufficient quantity of wholesome food. In the Madras army the custom is for a sepoy regiment to move from place to place, accompanied by all the families, sometimes consisting of two or three generations of men, women, and children, except when embarking for service out of India, or when engaged anywhere upon active service. This entails very great cost upon all concerned, and, in consequence, the Madras troops move less frequently than those of the other two presidencies, where these family arrangements are unknown. The Madras officers are very

much prejudiced in favor of this system, to which they in a great measure attribute the fact that the mutiny which swept over Bengal in 1857 did not even spread to those Madras regiments which were, comparatively speaking, near the Bengal troops who had turned against their officers. It is said that a native corps, when encumbered with this family impedimenta, is powerless for harm; that, having no homes beyond their regimental lines, if a regiment mutinied, the sepoys could not take their families with them, and would not dare to leave them behind in our power. In fact, it is believed by many that these families may be regarded as hostages for the good behavior of the men.

The new organization, which was carried out with ease in Bengal, where the old regular army may be said to have disappeared in the great mutiny, was introduced into the armies of Madras and Bombay in the teeth of considerable opposition from all concerned. Their officers said: "It is all very well to change the entire system of organization in Bengal, where the old system has completely broken down; but our armies are immaculate, our men have not mutinied, and it is hard to punish us for the sins of an army which we have long known to be rotten to its core."

The Madras army has about 2,000 native Christians in its ranks, and a considerable proportion of its men understand a little English—a knowledge which the other two armies do not possess. It is, of the three armies, the only one raised exclusively in India, about one-half being Mohammedans, and one-half Hindoos from the Telinga, Tamil, Brahmans, Rajpoots, Mahratta, and other classes. The Bombay army is not so uniform in its composition as that of Madras. It has about 600 Christians and Jews, about 5,000 Mohammedans, 3,000 Brahmans and Rajpoots, 8,000 Mahrattas, 3,000 Purwarees, about 2,000 men from the Punjaub, about the same number of men from beyond the river Indus, consisting of Beloochees and Afghans, and some 4,000 of other castes and races.

By far the finest fighting material is drawn from the northern frontier provinces, in which the men have a finer *physique*, and are of a more martial temperament, than in the south. It has been said that one might quite as well compare a Greek with an Englishman as a Madrassee with a Pathan. Long-continued

peace, extending through the lives of several generations, seems to change the character of an Asiatic people; and as the lower races of animals are said to alter their fur according to the temperature of the country in which they are bred, and, as generations sweep on, to have even their physical appearance adapted to the altered conditions under which they are forced to exist, so it would seem that about seventy years of peace have to a great extent robbed the Madras army of that warlike spirit which it displayed on many a well-fought field in the earlier period of our rule in the Deccan. Since the battle of Mahidpore, in 1817, I do not think that army has had its fighting qualities severely tested, and, from seeing nothing of war, the people of the south have settled down into a peaceable, law-abiding series of communities, whose docility has passed into a proverb. In the Bombay army, commanding officers endeavor to fill their ranks with Rajpoots from Oude, with Sikhs, and with Afghans, preferring men from any of our Indus-frontier districts to those they can obtain within the Bombay Presidency itself. The Mahrattas, as horsemen, were at one period the terror of all India, and they still make very fine soldiers: they are brave, hardy, and willing, having fewer caste prejudices than the Hindoo of the Bengal army. By their shrewdness and activity, they assisted materially in all the British conquests from 1795 to 1820 in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Beloochistan, bordering as it does upon our trans-Indus territory, supplies us with some very excellent soldiers: they are Mohammedans, but not imbued with the religious rancor and fanaticism so strong among the Pathan tribes. As a race, however, they are great robbers, and frequently descend from their hills in parties of from fifty to one hundred and even five hundred strong to plunder the villages in the plains, sparing those only which are inhabited by their own tribe. Although celebrated as horsemen, they prefer dismounting to fight, attacking fiercely with sword, shield, and dagger, being well skilled in the use of their weapons. They are great fatalists, a trait which does not certainly detract from their value as soldiers. They are athletic, but despise labor; they are chivalrous, but hanker after the possession of their neighbors' goods. They are great admirers of personal prowess, and, when a comrade falls in battle, their custom is to strip him, tying a red or green string

round the right or left wrist, according to what they consider to have been the courage he displayed in dying, the red string being the highest honor. During one of our hill-campaigns against them, a sergeant with a handful of British soldiers, mistaking a signal made to him by his captain, attacked a large body of Beloochees in a very inaccessible position : the attack was hopeless, but was made in what was believed to be obedience to orders, and made by all the party with reckless daring. All were killed, and, when the bodies were subsequently recovered by their comrades, round not one, but both the wrists of each Englishman, there was found to be a red string tied, as a mark of Beloochee admiration and esteem for the great courage of an enemy who had not hesitated to attack against such overwhelming odds.

Of all three native armies, that of Bengal is, without doubt, the best in every respect ; composed of the finest materials, it is by far the most effective as a military instrument for war purposes. It is larger than the armies of Bombay and Madras put together, and, as a year seldom passes by without some portion of it being engaged on active service, a spirit of warlike adventure is kept alive in it which is as necessary to the health—I might say to the very life of all armies—as oxygen is to human existence. For the protection of a portion of the trans-Indus frontier, there is a special little army, called the “Punjaub Frontier Force,” which, by an anomalous arrangement, is not under the commander-in-chief, but under the orders of the civil officer administering the Punjaub. It consists of six regiments of cavalry, twelve regiments of infantry, and four batteries of native artillery (three of them provided with mountain-equipment). It is composed of many races, but the bulk of the men are either Sikhs, Punjabee, Mohammedans, Pathans, or Goorkhas, a large proportion coming from small independent communities beyond our borders.

To understand our native army well, one must know something of the characteristics of the races from which it is drawn. I shall, therefore, shortly refer to one or two of the most famous tribes among them.

The Sikhs, whose power we finally overturned in 1849, were originally a religious sect founded by a renegade Mohammedan priest in the fifteenth century. The religion may be generally

described as bearing the same relation to the Hindoo creed that Protestantism does to the Roman Catholic faith; it is a species of reformed Hindooism, although strongly impregnated with a coloring drawn from the Koran. Indeed, Nanak, the founder of it, appears to have endeavored to reconcile the opposing faiths of Moslem and Hindoo in his teaching, and above all things to have preached the unity of the Deity and peace on earth. The persecution to which the Sikhs were subjected by the members of the two great dominant religions drove them, however, to arms, and, when we had our first dealings with them, we found them united into a powerful independent state by the talents and warlike genius of Runjeet Sing, who ruled at Lahore as lord and master of the Punjaub. They are a fine, brave people, and, when we took possession of the country, they were thoroughly inured to war. There every man was armed, and the peasant ploughing in the field carried his sword and shield as he prepared his land for the crop which he never knew who might reap; this he knew, however, that, unless he was prepared manfully to defend it, he had better spare himself the labor of sowing. Our policy since then has been in disarming the people, to whom we afforded protection by an armed police, to wean them from their warlike proclivities, and teach them to become law-abiding citizens. The officers who fought against them at Sobraon, at Ferozshah, etc., bear testimony to their valor, and their discipline as soldiers under us is well known to all who have ever served with them. They are a handsome, smoke-colored (not black) people. By an ordinance of their religion, no man ever cuts his hair, which grows to a considerable length. The soldier coils it up under his turban, but is very fond of combing it out during all moments of leisure. In the same way he twists up his long beard into a knot under his chin, or ties it up behind his ears over his head. They are very vain of their personal appearance, fond of fine, gorgeous clothing, and take an especial delight in contemplating their fine, regular features in the small looking-glass which each soldier generally carries about him. The Sikh is one of the very very few people who does not smoke, that practice being also forbidden by his creed, but he eats either bang or opium instead; he takes these narcotics in very small quantities, carrying them in the form of

pills in a little box. We enlist them into both our cavalry and infantry; they are not particularly good horsemen, but as foot-soldiers they have always had a great reputation in India.

The Afridees, and other Pathan tribes inhabiting the mountains which form our northwestern Indian frontiers, are noble, Mohammedan savages, utterly faithless to all public engagements, but still imbued with a sort of chivalrous hospitality that one cannot help admiring. The Afghans generally are devoted to their country and to their clan, and have what we would call great pride of birth, counting back their descent through a long string of ancestry. They are revengeful and rapacious, brave, hardy, cunning, and prudent. Their system of government is democratic, while their southern neighbors, the Beloochees, lean toward monarchical institutions. Every tribe is divided into numerous clans, each independent, and yielding but faint obedience to its own immediate petty head-man. They are constantly at war, not only one tribe with another, one small village against another, but even one family against its neighbors. Each and all keep a sort of debtor and credit account with their neighbors, life for life. Cold-blooded assassination is not only permitted, but enjoined as an article of faith, and the man who meets another with whom or with whose family his own relations have a blood-feud, is bound, according to the Afghan code of morality, as well as of honor, to slay him forthwith. There is no challenge to mortal combat given, no encounter upon equal conditions of arms, etc., required: if, when concealed, watching for your enemy behind a rock you can shoot him, so much the better. It is by no means uncommon for one of our soldiers to ask his commanding officer for a short furlough, nominally to visit his friends in the hills, but really with a view to killing some neighbor who had rendered himself obnoxious to the sepoy's family, or in order to balance the murder account existing between his village or his relations and some other village or family in the district! Having obtained leave, he starts for the hills, where his people live in independence, beyond our frontier, and, having killed his man, returns to his military duty quite satisfied with himself. With these treacherous barbarians the two highest commandments are, blood for blood, and fire and sword for all kafirs—that is, infidels, or those who are not follow-

ers of the Prophet. This spirit of fanaticism, with which they are imbued by their priests, renders it impossible for us to accept them as soldiers in any large numbers ; though, strange to say, the greater proportion in each Punjaub regiment has always behaved very well when engaged in the hills against their own kinsmen, so great is the influence of discipline even over these wild savages. Hospitality is a virtue on which they set great store ; and while under a man's roof you are safe from injury ; but, once left it, your host, who an hour before had declared that all he possessed was yours, that he was your slave, and who had given expression to other figments of purely Eastern conventionality, would without scruple murder you in the most cold-blooded manner for perhaps the old boots you had on, if perchance he had taken a fancy to them. The Pathan mother prays that her son may be a successful robber, and the mullahs (priests), whose influence is great among this superstitious people, encourage them in their thieving propensities. Most of these tribes depend principally upon their flocks and herds for support, and, as the duty of guarding and watching them only affords occupation to a few, the Evil Spirit easily obtains a power over the idle but muscular bands of the many, finding employment for them in deeds of violence. Assassination is, according to their notions, quite as noble a species of warfare as any that we practise, and one cannot make them appreciate the distinction between the murder of an individual enemy and his destruction *en gros* on the field of battle.

They are naturally quick in reply, evincing great acuteness and ingenuity in their discussions on public affairs with our officers, one of whom relates the following story : At a council of Warzeeree head-men one day where he had been presiding, some of those present retired to say their prayers. As they went through their devotions near him, he remarked to a chief, what a pity it was that men so scrupulous about their religious observances should pay so little respect to truth as to think it no shame to deceive him about their crops, their revenue, etc. His immediate reply was : " Yes, that may be so ; there was evidently some radical defect in their religious conduct, since God had thought fit to send a governor " (the English officer) " to rule over those who had been independent for so many previous centuries." There are, however, great differences in the disposition and cus-

toms and even the morality of these wild races from which we obtain our most hardy sepoys, those known as the "pass Afri-dees" (coming from the neighborhood of the Kyber) being the most difficult to tame and discipline. As a tribe their boast is that they have seen kings and generals come and go through the pass they call their own, but they have never bowed in allegiance to any. The officers commanding our regiments are naturally anxious to secure the services of such splendid men, trusting to the influence of discipline and to their own individual force of character and power over the native mind to smooth down their traits of licentious independence and to impart to them an honorable regard for the military engagement they entered into upon enlistment. Good faith and unswerving allegiance to the masters whose salt they eat is the highest and most essential virtue in an Eastern soldier, and hundreds of instances might be recorded where those wearing the British uniform have, under the most trying circumstances of temptation, remained loyal and true, although belonging to tribes where public faith is an unknown virtue. The independent tribes immediately bordering the Punjaub frontier can furnish about 170,000 fighting-men, of whom about 20,000 are Beloochees, the remainder of Pathan race.

The Goorkhas, of whom we have five regiments, are a Nepaulese race, and are easily recognized in India by their Chinese, Tartar-like features, of a flat nose and lidless-looking eyes; they have little or no whiskers, are short in stature, but with stout, squarely-built bodies and sturdy limbs, in fact, eminently suited for hill-warfare. They are Hindoos, and peculiarly sensitive about the killing of their sacred animal to satisfy the beef-eating appetite of the Englishman. Wherever they have been engaged they have earned the admiration of their British comrades; indeed, the regiment that took part in the siege of Delhi won for itself everlasting distinction. Out of its complement of 500 men it lost 319 upon that occasion. No men are fiercer in action; when they kill a man they like to smear their faces and hands with his blood, and in that condition they present a terrible aspect to men unaccustomed to their manners.

The strength of our Indian native army has varied from time to time according to the exigencies of war, but I do not think it

has ever been over about 250,000 men, an establishment it reached in 1858-'59. As years go by, the advantages of peace become more appreciated by the people; internal wars cease, and the only outlets for the would-be soldier's ambition are to be found in our army, and in the forces maintained by the feudatory and independent native princes. More men, therefore, turn their attention every succeeding year to agricultural and other peaceable pursuits. As the public mind grows less warlike, the army required to secure internal peace and order can be gradually diminished. We have long since given up the policy of annexing more territory to our Eastern empire; but, before this new policy had been adopted, for each successive province we acquired, a military force in proportion to its population was required to maintain order in it. In many instances the annexation was forced upon us by the uncontrollable lawlessness of the people concerned, but in nearly all cases we found a more or less turbulent population accustomed to bloodshed and internecine warfare. Compelling the native rulers to disband their troops, we had to deal with these discharged soldiers for at least one generation afterward, and they constituted a dangerous element, requiring constant watching, and the presence of a strong detachment from our army to overawe. As long as we had to provide for contingencies of this nature, we required a considerable number of native regiments; but, now that all the territory we rule over has long been subject to the peace-inculcating principles of our Government, the maintenance of law and order can be secured by a police, with little or no backing-up from the moral support afforded by the presence of a military force. In former times, some of the independent states within the peninsula of Hindostan were allowed to have great organized forces, approaching the strength and importance of armies. They were more or less a standing menace to our authority, supplying the disaffected with a rallying-point to which they could look for the redress of supposed wrongs. In those days, also, the means of rapid communication were small; the roads were few and bad. Then, there was much less difference than now between the military efficiency of an army organized after an Asiatic fashion and one organized on European principles: in fact, the weapons of both were much the same, whereas, now that our Indian troops are armed with

breech-loading rifles, and that we only allow the small contingents which we permit some of the native princes to maintain to have muzzle-loading smooth-bore muskets, the superiority of our native troops over all others in India has been increased a hundred-fold. The numbers of troops kept up to add to the self-importance of the Indian chiefs and princes is still, however, imposing on paper, as it reaches a total of about 300,000 men. We endeavor to keep it down as much as possible, not only from motives of purely British policy, but also because we regard the maintenance of so many idle men as a heavy tax upon the people, since we have assumed to ourselves the duties of providing for the internal peace and external defense of the country.

The instinct of Easterns is to estimate the importance of a prince very much in a direct ratio to the number of armed retainers he has about him; and it is difficult, therefore, to induce an Indian rajah to dispense with his little army, when he believes that his rank and position in the country depend very much upon it. At present the only purely native forces worthy of any consideration in India are those kept up by Sindia and the Nizam: the former has the rank of general in our service, the latter is still a boy. Now that railways and good metaled roads pierce the country in all directions (we have now over 7,000 miles of railway open in India), and that steam flotillas exist upon all the navigable rivers, we can concentrate on any threatened point any required number of troops with a rapidity undreamed of at the beginning of this century. Our army is maintained in the highest condition of efficiency both as to equipment and discipline, and, owing to the large amount of carriage in the shape of elephants, camels, mules, and bullocks, kept up for its use, troops can be moved upon the shortest notice. These circumstances have enabled us to reduce the strength of our native army to its present moderate establishment of about 132,000 sabres and bayonets. This, of course, is in addition to a large force of armed police acting exclusively under the orders of the civil authorities.

To the eye accustomed only to the uniforms of European armies, the dress of our native troops, especially that of the cavalry, is striking and picturesque. The graceful turban is pleasant to look at, and the variety of color, especially in the clothing of the Bengal army, gives an artistic effect to an assemblage of Indian

soldiers to be seen upon no parade-ground in Western countries. The men carry no knapsacks of any description, which causes them to have an appearance of suppleness and freedom of movement that is so remarkably wanting to the overladen soldiers of all European armies. The lance is the favorite weapon of the Indian cavalry-soldier, although he can also make very deadly use of his tulwar (sword), which, kept in a wooden scabbard, has an edge so sharp that it cuts all it touches. "Tent-pegging" is a very favorite amusement of the sowar, and, to those who have never been in India, it is curious to see how proficient he is at it. I have no doubt that the inhabitants of Malta have already been amazed at the graceful ease with which he accomplishes the feat of picking up the peg on the end of his lance. A tent-peg, two feet long, is driven with a large, heavy mallet into the ground, about three inches of it only remaining visible. At this small object the lancer rides at full gallop, endeavoring as he passes to transfix it with his lance, and, if he succeeds, the pace at which he is going causes the lance to draw the peg from the ground. It is a very pretty sight to see the successful trooper twirl his lance in triumph round his head as he rides off with the large, heavy tent-peg still firmly fixed on its point.

Previous to 1857, we had a considerable force of native artillery, but since then, with the exception of a few mountain-batteries for work on the northwest frontier, the artillery force in India is exclusively composed of British soldiers. The native attaches far greater importance to the possession of guns in action than we do : it is not so much on account of the loss he may hope to inflict thereby upon his enemy, as for the moral effect which the noise of artillery-fire has upon native troops ; it seems to lend them increased confidence and courage, and, from having seen them, upon several occasions when our troops were advancing to attack them, fire blank cartridges before we had approached within the range of their guns, I presume they imagine it has a correspondingly depressing effect upon an enemy. Their belief in guns almost amounts to a superstition ; and, knowing that, to protect ourselves against dangerous mutinies, we keep the artillery entirely in our own hands.

Since the invasion of Russia by Napoleon, we have been accustomed to hear a good deal of the Cossack troops, and of the

advantages possessed by an army well provided with them. We saw them in the Crimea, and all who know our Indian cavalry infinitely prefer the latter. They are far more intelligent, are better armed, and in every way better men, mounted on much better horses. Should we ever be engaged in any great European war, we could easily send 10,000 of them from India, which, added to the 6,000 British sabres we could put in the field, would form a very imposing cavalry force. The native infantry we could draw from India would be practically unlimited in number. No European troops are such good marchers, and all who have learned, from personal experience with them in action, to appreciate their fighting value, will agree with me in thinking that our recent discovery of how willing, nay anxious, our Indian army is to fight in this hemisphere, will enable England to reoccupy the military position she held in the estimation of the world at the beginning of this century.

G. I. WOLSELEY.